



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

COMMANDING OFFICER
USS SPRUANCE (DDG 111)
FPO AP 96678-1203

Shipmate and family, **this is *your* ship!** Welcome aboard!

Congratulations on your assignment to the Navy's newest guided missile destroyer, USS SPRUANCE (DDG 111). The ship is the 61st Aegis destroyer and the 33rd of the Flight IIA variant. SPRUANCE honors Admiral Raymond Ames Spruance, USN, and is the second U.S. Navy ship to bear his name. Admiral Spruance is considered one of the greatest fighting and thinking admirals in American history as the leader some of our greatest victories in the Pacific during World War II, including the Battle of Midway and the Battle of the Philippine Sea.

SPRUANCE will complete the final stages of construction in the summer of 2011 at Bath Iron Works (BIW) in Bath, Maine. If you arrive in the late summer, you will meet us in the shipyard environment and will begin training on all of SPRUANCE's systems. In mid-June we move aboard the ship, and begin training in earnest to take the ship out to sea.

The final sailaway from Maine will occur in September 2011. We will make our way around the United States, visit a few liberty ports and working ports, and will commission the ship into naval service, in Key West, Florida in October. The Commissioning celebration is effectively the "grand opening" of the ship, during which we celebrate the accomplishments of the ship's first crew, the "plankowners", and show of your ship to the public. After Commissioning, we then sail through the Panama Canal en route to our home port of San Diego, California by early fall 2011. Once in San Diego, we will get underway often to test all aspects of the ship, including key weapons firing events, as we begin to train toward our first deployment.

Review the "Welcome Aboard Package" you will find here on the ship's website. This section includes check-in instructions, mailing addresses, travel and pay rules, lodging, housing, household goods, and points of contact. Study the website in detail to answer most questions you might have. For those who report aboard in the summer of 2011, the nearby base at Naval Air Station Brunswick ME closes in May 2011, which will have minor impacts on our crew.

The entitlements (pay and allowances) associated with the ship construction process are different than any other Navy assignment you have been on to date. If your orders are dated after April 15th, 2011, the only move entitlements for families will be to the ultimate homeport San Diego. If your orders show you reporting to Maine in 2011, the ACC for those orders will only support the individual Sailor living temporarily in Maine as a geographic bachelor, while your dependents will be authorized normal relocation and housing entitlements for San Diego. **After the ship sails in September, all inbound Sailors will either meet the ship enroute, or will meet the ship on arrival in San Diego.**

I am honored to be your Captain, and look forward to meeting you and your family as we prepare to take ownership of the newest and most technologically advanced warship in the world. Your shipmates come from all walks of life, from numerous states, and from many countries. Whatever your background, I can promise you a personally and professionally rewarding experience, and the opportunity for you to make a lasting contribution to the life and culture of this ship, to the Navy, and to the United States. **I thank you for your service, and especially thank your family for their support and many sacrifices in their service to our nation.**

Sincerely,

M. T. WESTBROOK